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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ADDIS ABABA 001285

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TAGS: [KPKO](#) [PBTS](#) [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [ET](#) [ER](#)  
SUBJECT: ETHIOPIAN FRUSTRATION WITH THE UNSC OVER THE BORDER

Classified By: Ambassador Donald Yamamoto for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

SUMMARY  
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¶1. (C) Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles met with the UK, French and U.S. Ambassadors May 9 to state that Ethiopia would disengage and keep quiet on the Eritrea-Ethiopia border dispute. Meles said the Ethiopian Government (GoE) had developed a set of new proposals to break the impasse and push forward on direct bilateral discussions with Eritrea on resolution of overall problems and the demarcation of the border. The UN Security Council (UNSC) meeting on Belgium's proposals on May 8 so frustrated Meles that he said Ethiopia had lost faith in the UNSC to act to restore and reaffirm the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement and the Algiers Accord, the fundamental agreements guiding the resolution of the border dispute. Meles said the Belgian proposals allowed Eritrea to "get away" with undercutting the two agreements and eliminating the UNMEE Mission. Meles questioned whether the international community is committed to the two agreements. If the current situation is acceptable, then Meles suggested that a new regime -- new agreements -- will be necessary to resolve the border dispute specifically, and overall Eritrean-Ethiopian bilateral relations in general. Meles said he would remain receptive to the UNSC establishing a military observer mission only in Ethiopia and promoting normalization talks if the UNSC states clearly how it will deal with Eritrea's actions forcing the marginalization of the two agreements and the UN Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE). End Summary.

ETHIOPIA'S PEACE PROPOSALS  
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¶2. (C) Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles expressed deep frustration that the UNSC discussed Belgium's proposals to move the demarcation process forward at the UN on May 8 while overlooking the two fundamental agreements which guide the resolution of the problems between Ethiopia and Eritrea, including the demarcation of the disputed border. Meles said Ethiopia had developed a package of proposals to break the impasse clearly based on the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement and Algiers Accord. Meles noted that Ethiopia was in favor of establishing a UN military observer mission only on the Ethiopia side of the border, though Eritrea had rejected such an idea. Meles also would push for normalization talks, which was supported by the Witnesses to the Algiers Accord in 2006. But discussions of the Belgian proposals is viewed by Ethiopia, Meles argued, as "giving in"

to Eritrea's temper tantrum tactics to undercut and marginalize the two agreements.

13. (C) Meles expressed deep frustration. He reviewed Eritrea's unprecedented actions to restrict UN operations without much criticism or consequences, which now sets a bad precedent for other countries to restrict UN operations. Eritrea's ability to throw out UNMEE peacekeepers from specific countries (U.S., U.K., France, etc.) last year and now finally throw out UNMEE was unacceptable. Eritrea's recent incursion into Djiboutian territory, again without criticism, will only encourage President Isaias to further undercut the international community, Meles argued.

14. (C) Meles said Eritrea's actions of militarizing the Temporary Security Zone (TSZ) along the border and taking over the TSZ have now violated the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement. He added that Eritrea's refusal to renounce the use of force to resolve the border dispute adds tensions to the region. Meles argued that it was Ethiopia that has been most supportive of the U.N., hinting at Ethiopia's full participation in peacekeeping operations in Liberia, Cote d'Ivoire and Darfur. Meles stated that Ethiopia must now table its package of proposals because without the UNSC support, Eritrea would only view Ethiopia's actions as a sign of weakness and President Isaias would not respond positively.

#### UNSC RESPONSIBILITIES

15. (C) Meles articulated that the UNSC must restore the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement by making it clear that

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the TSZ must be neutral and that all forces must leave the TSZ. Most important, violence and the use of force must be renounced. The UNSC must restore commitment by Eritrea to the Algiers Accord. Ultimately the parties themselves must resolve their bilateral differences and implement the demarcation process. This has been the basis of the two agreements and numerous UNSC resolutions.

16. (C) Meles said Eritrea has succeeded in eliminating UNMEE. The only way a UN military observer mission could operate would be under a separate agreement. It could not be based on the Algiers Accord, because the UN mission would be only on one side of the border and the TSZ is now militarized by Eritrea. Meles emphasized that the UNSC is not the implementer of the Algiers Accord, but it had taken upon itself to impose its will by supporting the EEBC. It is up to the parties to implement the border demarcation decision, not the UN, Meles stated. The UNSC is authorized to act to enforce the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement, but the UNSC has not chosen to enforce this agreement. As a result of the frustration over the actions and lack of actions by the UNSC, the GoE will remain quiet and not engage the UNSC on the border issue, for now, Meles said.

17. (C) Meles cautioned the Ambassadors that Eritrean President Isaias' recent incursion into Djibouti is very dangerous if left unchecked. UNSC inaction, thus far, will only encourage Isaias to push harder and increase tensions in the region, Meles said. Meles opined that there will not be war between Eritrea and Ethiopia, but that regional tensions will increase as a result of Isaias' actions. Finally, despite the frustration, Meles said Ethiopia still remains supportive of a UN Military Observation mission to Ethiopia and holding of normalization talks.

#### COMMENT

18. (C) Meles' question as to the international community's commitment to the Algiers Accord and the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement is disingenuous. Both Meles and Isaias agreed to abide by whatever decision the EEBC made. While we

cautioned both parties to consider an appeals process into the agreements, both refused. Meles has been pushing dialogue as a means to change the EEBC's final demarcation decision. We and the Witnesses fully support dialogue, but only in the context of normalizing relations and discussing the consequences of demarcation, not adjustment of the EEBC's decision. Ultimately, any adjustment of the decision must be made by the parties themselves as it will be up to the parties to implement the decision.

¶9. (C) Meles' "package of proposals" echoes the confidence building proposals that the United States tabled in 2005 to both Meles and Isaias. At that time, Meles embraced the proposals and Isaias wanted further discussions. Still, the proposals can be a useful means to move the process forward, but cannot -- and must not -- be used as a means to undercut or revise the two basic agreements of 2000.

¶10. (C) It would be useful if the UNSC reiterates its support for the Algiers Accord and Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities, and emphasizes the parties' responsibilities and commitments therein. We strongly recommend that Ethiopia not propose a new "regime" or set of agreements to be negotiated to determine how to settle the border and the problems between Ethiopia and Eritrea. This would prove messy, would raise questions on how we proceed with resolution of the border, and would mean the end of the Algiers process. End Comment.  
YAMAMOTO